



**HOTELS' MANAGER PERCEPTION TOWARDS
NON-ALCOHOL PREMISES IN MALAYSIA**

BY

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requirements for the degree of Master of Halal
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ABSTRACT

As a global leader in the Islamic tourism, Malaysia recognises the urgent need to lay the best foundation for the sector for its future to grow sustainably. The Islamic Tourism Masterclass – Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services Standard is a capacity building programme jointly organised by Malaysia's national accreditation body, Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM) and Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC). This collaborative effort aims to engage the tourism players in promoting and guiding them with the practicality and adaptability aspects of the MS2610:2015 Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services – Requirements standard. However, the adoption of the standard requires the limitation in industry practice. One of the limitations is the restriction of alcohol in the hospitality which sparks the argument, discussion and opinion about the unavailability of alcohol services especially in three (3), four (4) and five (5) star hotel. To explore the readiness of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel hoteliers' on alcohol restriction in their premises, quantitative research was chosen. Questionnaires or social surveys were a method used to collect data from 143 respondents. From the study 72.9 % of the respondents ready to adopt alcohol restriction in their premises which consist of 3, 4 and 5-star business hotel. Three-star hotel (100%) is the readiest hotel in implementing non-alcohol policy hotel compared to four stars (53.1%) and five-star hotel (39.1%). The studies on Muslim Friendly Hotel were required to understand the flexibility of Malaysia Standard MS2610:2015: Muslim Friendly Hospitality. Therefore, from the research, the government will gain the information on adaptation of policy development that can bring the product globally. Besides, the related authority can use the information from the research as a basis for practising the policies on their governance area. Moreover, the non-government organisation (NGO) can identify the strength and weaknesses of their services area to be empowered, maintained and repaired towards better services to tourist. Besides, hotelier will reap benefits by improving their knowledge on improving their services quality. Moreover, researchers' alike will utilise the data and finding of this research to solve or finding alternatives for their research and politician and stakeholders will strategise the best solution on supporting the national growth of the economy.

ملخص البحث

بصفتها أحد قادة العالم في مجال السياحة الإسلامية ، تُدرك ماليزيا أهمية وضع أفضل أساس ممكن لهذا المجال لينمو بصورة مستمرة مستقبلاً. الفئة الرئيسية (Masterclass) للسياحة الإسلامية هي "معيار خدمات الضيافة الموافقة للعوادات الإسلامية" وهو برنامج لبناء القدرات أُسس باشتراك كل من هيئة الاعتماد الماليزية القومية، قسم المعايير الماليزية (Department of standards) ومركز السياحة الإسلامية (Islamic tourism Centre). هذا المجهود التعاوني يطمح لإعداد مسؤولي السياحة عن طريق تطويرهم وإرشادهم بكل من النواحي العملية وقدرة تبنى الفئة الرئيسية (MS2610:2015) لمتطلبات معايير خدمات الضيافة الموافقة للعوادات الإسلامية. رغم ذلك، فإن تبنى المعيار يتطلب تقييدات في ممارسات الصناعة. إحدى هذه التقييدات هو تحريم الخمر في الضيافة وهو موضوع يثير الجدل، والمناقشات والأراء الخاصة بعدم وجود خدمات الخمر خاصة في الفنادق ذات الثلاث والأربع والخمسة نجوم. ولاستكشاف مدى استعداد مسؤولي هذه الفنادق على التخلي عن الخمر في مبانيهم، تم اختيار تطبيق بحث كمي. كانت الاستبيانات أو الاستطلاعات الاجتماعية منهجاً مُتخذاً لتجميع المعلومات من 143 شخصاً. بناء على النتائج، 72.9% من المستجيبين أظهروا استعداداً للتخلي عن الخمر في مبانيهم والتي تتكون من كل من الفنادق ذات الثلاث والأربع والخمسة نجوم. حصل الفندق ذو الثلاث نجوم على 100% ويعتبر أكثر الفنادق استعداداً لتبنى سياسة منع الخمر مقارنة بالفندق ذو الأربع نجوم والذي حصل على 53.1% والفندق ذو الخمسة نجوم والذي حصل على 39.1%. كان هناك احتياج لدراسة الفنادق الموافقة للعوادات الإسلامية لفهم مدى مرونة معيار ماليزيا MS2610:2015 للضيافة الموافقة للعوادات الإسلامية. ولذلك، فإن الحكومة ستستفيد من هذه الدراسة بحصولها على معلومات عن تطوير سياسة التبنى والتي ستروج للمنتج بشكل عالمي. بجانب ذلك، فإن المسؤولين يستطيعون استخدام هذه المعلومات كأساس في ممارسة السياسات في منطقة الحكم الخاصة بهم. زيادة على ذلك، فإن الجمعيات الغير حكومية تستطيع تحديد نقاط القوة والضعف الموجودة في خدماتهم لتطويرها والمحافظة عليها وإصلاحها للحصول على خدمات أفضل للسياح. كما أن مسؤولي الفنادق سيستفيدون بتحسين جودة خدماتهم. زيادة على ذلك، فإن الباحثين سيستخدمون معلومات هذا البحث ونتائجه لحل أو إيجاد بدائل لأبحاثهم. أما السياسيون وأصحاب المصالح فسوف يضعون أفضل الخطط لدعم التنمية الاقتصادية القومية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS) Malaysian Standard MS2610:2015 is Malaysia's first standard dedicated to the Islamic tourism sector. Initiated and led by International Institute of Halal Research & Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This was followed by the appointment of Standard and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM) as the standard's secretariat by Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM) and the formation of a draft committee by the Technical Committee (TC) on Management System from Islamic Perspectives (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2015).

To be awarded as Muslim friendly tourism accommodation premises (TAP), there was some restriction needs to be implementing. One of the limitations was the alcohol preparation restriction in term of beverage and food in the room. Therefore, the research on the hotelier behavior on alcohol restriction in hotel's room was needed to see the practicality of the tool.

As the tourist destination by Muslim tourist locally and internationally had changed after 9/11 tragedy, the supply of the tourism services in Malaysia should support necessity and desire of the tourist to attract more tourist to come in especially from Muslim countries. These necessities are demand for Muslim friendly tourism accommodation premises (TAP) that needed to be supplied by the host of the destination. TAP is the tourism accommodation premises that encompass hotel, resort and homestay. This research will support the growth one of Islamic tourism

products in Malaysia which will directly contribute to the growth of national economies.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The implementation of Muslim friendly hotel has grown rapidly as the demand for Muslim friendly services increased. According to Nur'Hidayah et al. (2012), most market studies conducted in the Middle Eastern region shows that it is a strong and increasing demand for dry hotel services. In line with this notion, the consciousness in Islamic lifestyle living and traveling leads to the demand for Muslim friendly hotel practices.

Generally, there are many perspectives on the definition or concept of Muslim Friendly Hotel (MFH). But the literature that discusses the definition of Muslim friendly compliant hotel is very limited. For example, this a group of researchers shows the same view on the characteristic of Muslim friendly hotel. Most of the researchers agreed that the implementation of Muslim friendly hotel should free from alcohol preparation (Hesham et. al.,2014; Henderson, J. C.,2010).

Secondly, although there were no specific definitions of Muslim friendly hotel, some had defined that Muslim friendly hotel is the hotel that runs and operated on Islamic principles, which means they are alcohol-free, serve halal food, and provide a percentage of their profit to charity (Channel Muslim Media, 2013; Md. Aminul I. & Laura K., 2013; Aomarun J. & Kaedsiri J., 2013). The alcohol-free hotel still will be grant as Muslim friendly hotel even though the hotel did not follow other guidelines in the Muslim friendly hotel (Mohd F. ,2011). The concept of Muslim Friendly Hotel in term of hotel operational is same as hotel management.

In management perspective, Muslim friendly hotel is the hotel that business dealing activities that allowed in *Shariah*. Bars, alcohol and any other miscellaneous entertainments and business that deemed against the law of *Shariah* are not permissible in Muslim friendly hotel (Shirzad M., 2014; Oliver R. H. & Pierre K., 2011). Malaysia Standard on Muslim Friendly Hospitality services (MS2610:2015 on 5.2.1.1 (g)) has stated that alcohol beverages and intoxication shall not be stored in the room's refrigerator.

According to Islamic *Shariah*, it is completely forbidden for Muslims to drink or sell alcohol. Besides, it is also not permissible for Muslims to visit places where alcohol is consumed and gambling is practiced (Mohamed B. et. al., 2010). Therefore, any activities related to alcohol are not permissible for Muslim to get involved with.

However, the right of non-Muslim on alcohol drink in Muslim countries is not restricted as long as it does not provoke the nuisance and safety of the public. The alcohol consumption should comply with procedures and limitation of *Shariah* (Jamal & Anuar, 2012). According to Hashim (2002), the hotels that provide alcohol services still approve under *Shariah* criteria as long as the alcohol beverage is not the main business in the premises. Besides, the approval of alcohol preparation was done to assist non-Muslim need and to respect other religious practices.

Operationally, Muslim friendly hotel is a Halal-based service operation practices in the hotels. These hotels should have restaurants which serve Halal food, in accordance to the teachings of *Shariah* law and is free of any forbidden products such as pork and alcohol (Mohd et al., 2013).

The operation of Islamic hotel generally was similar to the other conventional hotels. The only difference is that the operational aspects of the hotels are adjusted to

comply with the Islamic principle of Shariah law. Neither alcohol nor pork should be served in any of the food and beverage outlets at the hotel and there should be no mini-bar in the rooms (Rosenberg and Choufany, 2009).

There are still implications upon the implementation of Muslim friendly hotel especially when it comes to the restriction of alcohol preparation on hotel premises. Most of four (4) to five (5) star hotel in Malaysia preserve the alcohol in their premises which make a complication on giving halal certificate by Jabatan Agama Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) (Mohd,2011).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. Perceptions of alcohol restriction: loss of revenue, the downgrade of hotel starting and loss of the customer.

There were issues with alcohol restriction at tourism accommodation premises (TAP) such as loss of revenue, the downgrade of hotel starting and loss of the customer (Mohd et al, n.d). The revenue generated from food and beverage outlets could be as low as 10 percent of overall sales in a Shariah-compliant property due to alcohol absentee while in a full-service hotel it stays at a minimum of 30 percent Youmna et al. (2010). This is due to fewer customers to dine in and limiting the tourist who wants to stay at the non-alcohol hotel.

The restriction of alcohol also may affect the hotel star's. Hesham et al. (2014) stated that Grand Hyatt Hotel whereby the Egyptian tourism ministry threatened it by decreasing its category from five stars to three stars due to alcohol restriction practice by the hotel.

Mohd et al (n.d) state that indirect impact towards alcohol restriction in the hotel by reducing the number of consumer who will want to dine at the hotel restaurant and limiting the number of consumer who may want to stay at the hotel. Besides, Nur'Hidayah et. al (2012) stated that dry or Shariah Compliant hotel concept definitely going to put off some western guests and narrowing down potential market.

II. Alcohol is not the main demand from non- Muslim tourist.

Most of the non-Muslim tourist who visits Malaysia would stay at four (4) star hotels. According to Noor et al. (2013), 31.5% of the tourist out of 100% choose 4 star hotel. The reason is due to cheap price of the room and the comfort offered by four (4) star hotel. This finding can be concluded that the choice of hotel selection is due to affordable and cheap prices offered by the hotel, not due to the availability of bar or alcohol drink.

In addition, a study had been done by Mhd et al. (2008) to evaluating the services of Malaysian hotels from the leisure traveler's perspectives. From the study, it was found that mini-bar was also not significantly important to local leisure tourists. This was probably because local tourists stayed in the hotel for a very short time and spent most of their vacation time for the leisure trip.

Despite less demand for alcohol from the tourist, hotelier still provides alcohol services in their premise. Most of the reason behind the alcohol preparation in the hotel is due to hotel profit. Nur'Hidayah et al. (2012) stated that besides rooms;

hotels make a huge profit from selling alcoholic beverages, discotheques, and nightclubs.

Besides, hotelier tends to follow international standard in maintaining their hotel star rating (Katie, 2015). International standard required three (3) star hotels to five (5) star hotels to have bar area. However, bar is associated with alcohol services.

III. Opportunity to be explored: alcohol is not main tourism attraction.

Finding from the study by Jumiati & Norazah (2013) showed most of the tourist who visits Malaysia was for education and health tourism offered by Malaysia. This shows that alcohol and bar availability in this country is not a factor to attract more tourists to come in. However, the study only focusing on the tourist from Indonesia that represent Asian tourist who visits Malaysia.

Other studies by Ahmad & Noor (1989) showed that the international tourist demand on Malaysia's tourism was due to they are per capita income, local tourism costs, currency and special events organized in the destination country. From the study, it shows that the demand of the tourist in Malaysia was also not due to alcohol, pub and bar availability in this country.

In addition, Md. & Laura (2013) stated that many international hotels serve halal food. Many hotel companies witnessed the success of sharia Sharia-compliant banking; halal or Muslim friendly beach holiday and investment sector and saw the opportunity where it encompasses the main aspect of Sharia-compliant living such as no alcohol, Halal food, the separate mosque for prayer and modest dressing.

Therefore, the studies on Muslim friendly hotel were required to explore the practicality of the implementation Malaysia Standard MS2610:2015: Muslim Friendly Hospitality services in the aspect of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel hoteliers' readiness on alcohol restriction of their premises.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

From the problem statement, three (3) research questions can be raised. They are:

1. What is the main factor considered by hotel manager in implementing Muslim friendly hotel concept?
2. What are the relation between alcohol with 3, 4 and 5-star hotels' profit, image, and hotel starting rate?
3. Are there any differences between manager perception of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel readiness towards alcohol restriction?

1.5 RESEARCH AIM & OBJECTIVES

The aim of this paper is to explore the readiness of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel hoteliers on alcohol restriction in their premises. To achieve the aim of the research, three objectives have been developed. They are:

1. To identify the main factor considered by hotel manager in implementing Muslim friendly hotel concept.
2. To identify the relationship between alcohol to 3, 4 and 5-star hotels' profit, image and starting rate.

3. To identify the differences between manager perception of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel readiness towards alcohol restriction.

1.6 RESEARCH SCOPE

The aim of the research is to explore the manager readiness of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel perception on alcohol restriction in their premises. To achieve the aim, case study approach was used. This study chooses 3, 4 and 5-star business hotels in Malaysia. The sampling was based on 3,4 and 5-star business hotel listed in Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH).

The scopes of the research consist of two (2) areas which are theoretical discussion and case study. At the preliminary stage of the study, the advantages and disadvantages of alcohol availability in the hotel together with alcohol demand in the hotel were studied before case study approach is used. The scopes of research in theoretical discussion consist of:

1. To understand the effect of alcohol availability in the hotel towards hotel's profit, image and starting rate inside and outside Malaysia. As the first objective of the research is to understand the relationship between alcohol to 3, 4 and 5-star hotel profit, image, and starting rate, therefore the demand on alcohol preparation, star rating compliant, place setting and operational period need to explore and clarified.
2. To identify hotel main aspect of consideration in implementing alcohol restriction based on profit, star rating, image, management and operation of the hotel.

3. To identify the differences between 3, 4 and 5-star hotel readiness towards alcohol restriction. As the aim of the research is to explore the readiness of 3, 4 and 5-star hotel on alcohol restriction in their premises, therefore the factors towards disagreement need to be studied.

After theoretical parts, the research scopes on case study are constructed to answer the entire research question and achieve all research objectives and aim of the research. The scopes are:

1. Identifying the awareness of 3, 4 & 5-star hotel manager on alcohol restriction.
2. Identifying issues and problems in alcohol restriction in 3, 4 & 5-star hotel in terms of profit, star rating and image. Understanding the advantage of non-alcohol implementation.
3. Identifying the 3, 4 & 5-star hotel hotelier awareness towards promoting healthy environment without alcohol.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The studies on Muslim Friendly Hotel were required to understand the flexibility of Malaysia Standard MS2610:2015: Muslim Friendly Hospitality. Therefore, from the research, the government will gain the information on adaptation of policy development that can bring the product globally. Besides, the related authority can use the information from the research as a basis for practicing the policies on their governance area. Moreover, the non-government organization (NGO) can identify

the strength and weaknesses of their services are to be empowered, maintained and repaired towards better services to tourist. In addition, hotelier will reap benefits by improving their knowledge on improving their services quality. Moreover, researchers' alike will utilize the data and finding of this research to solve or finding alternatives to their research and politician and stakeholders will strategize the best solution to supporting the national growth of the economy.

1.8 THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is divided into six (6) major chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of the research topic and briefly touches on the site study of the research. This will enlighten the purpose and the background of the research. Chapter two is about literature review on the research topic that gathering the information on the research that has been done related to the research topic. Chapter three will discuss the methodology of the research about collecting data from primary and secondary data. Chapter four is the chapter that will discuss the analysis of the data collection. Chapter five is the chapter that discusses the finding of the research. Finally, chapter six will provide recommendation and suggestion of the research topic based on the finding of the research.

1.9 CONCLUSION

As the conclusion, this chapter has briefly introduced the topic of the research. It comes out with the problem statement and research question that need to find it

alternatives or solutions. Next chapter will review the basic information about the research topic. It will be referenced from the foregoing journal, research, books and other resources of data.